

*Friendships
Pregnant
Families*

W. A. C. R.

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FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES.

FRIENDSHIP'S
FRAGRANT
FANCIES

By
CATHERINE MORIARTY

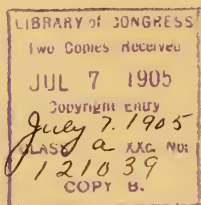


NEW YORK
DODGE PUBLISHING CO.
23 EAST 20TH STREET

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FIRST EDITION, MARCH 1905

PS 3525
.067 F7
1905



amp 4 Feb 24

DEDICATED TO
MY FATHER
JOHN RUSH



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WINDFALLS.

These are the gatherings of passive days:
Who chides me, then, for winnowing at will?
May I not have a loftier purpose still
Than coveting the inadvertent praise?

There are, I know, stray bitter ones among.
Some may be tasteless, and a few are sweet;
Beneath the trees I came with tarrying feet
And knew the fields wherein the choicest hung;

But passed with these—perhaps a scanty store.
I heard the reapers in the fallow grain,
I saw the bluebirds circling in the lane,
And felt that after all the best is poor.

The best is poor: for we are given dreams
That drift like wanton clouds against the west.
Not every grief by reasoning is redressed,
Not every joy is stranded in our themes.



Countess of Blessington

COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

“Beneath Blessington’s eyes
The reclaimed paradise
Should be free as the former from evil;
But if the new Eve
For an apple should grieve
What mortal would not play the devil.”

—*Lord Byron.*

Queen of a laurelled, bygone age
Thy triumphs brighten many a page,
For history too hath served thy art
And given to thee a name apart.
The canvas shows thy youthful face
Where mellowed genius left its trace,
Yet did the artist still regret
Thy subtle charms were but half met.

Was it the smile upon thy lips
Which cupid’s own had not eclipsed,
That made thy conquest so replete
And brought thy lovers to thy feet:
Was it the shrug of shoulders bare,
So round and smooth and softly fair,
Made each gallant boast he had won
Thy favor, Countess Blessington?

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Was it thy hand, my belle coquette,
That brushed in lightest minuet
Those fingers burning to ensnare
Thine own forever—did they dare?
Was it thy forehead broad and fine,
Of brilliant thought the noble shrine
And crowned with tresses dark and soft,
With glistening diadem aloft?

Perhaps it was thy regal way,
For who held prestige in that day
Of learning and of chivalry
My lady, when all bowed to thee?
Was it thy repartee so fit
Like sparks of fire struck from thy wit?
Or was it (ah! reflection sad!)
Thou wert not good—nor yet so bad.

Nay, in thine eyes lay all the spell;
Each courtier knew that full well.
Such eyes! A thousand witching arts
Settled therein their poignant darts;
And played through every luring mood
From lightest mirth to solitude
Flashing like stormy threatened skies —
Alack! for they were Irish eyes.

Nor did they laugh with sudden thought
E'en while thy very lips told naught,
Now deepen darkly with a glance
That seemed some mystery to enhance.
Now upward rise in keen rebuke
Upon presuming knight or duke,
Or falter, till in shadows meek
The fringing lashes swept thy cheek.

If Lawrence laid his brush aside
To say thy loveliness defied
His master hand: if poets swore
Men ne'er could see such beauty more;
What must I in this later day
But turn from thee and them away,
For long ago thy fame was won,
Imperial Countess Blessington.

A YOUNG WIFE.

They say her smile was sweetest when she lay
In that entralling power whose guise is sleep;
And I remember now it was her way
 To smile when sleep was deep.

Yet when I pressed the hand that lay so still
And called her name and smoothed her pretty hair,
She answered not, nor soothed with her dear will
 My lonely heart's fond care.

How softly lay the laces on her breast—
I thought she was so lovely in repose
That surely paradise was still more blessed
 In claiming my sweet rose.

A rose that throve in sunshine or in shade
Until at length death touched the tender bloom
And withered it just when it would have stayed
 To brighten in the gloom.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

And then at this my heart fell sick and blind—
I was but conscious of that vague unrest
And ceaseless yearning that must fill the mind
 When brooding death is guest.

Oh, still she sleeps! The jasmine blooms as then,
'And nature bears its warm life from the deeps;
'And summer birds sing lightly once again,
 But still, alas! she sleeps.

THE GOLDFINCH.

He, the audacious harbinger
Of matin pure, sets morn astir;
 The redbreast is not fleeter
Than this lithe, yellow feathered bird
Whose violative song is heard
 In such a gushing meter.

He wings away in snowy mist
Of silver thistledown, breeze kissed,
 And triumphs in its mazes;
He pecks the shaggy, half-blown sheath
And thrusts his saucy head beneath
 While chirping sweet self-praises.

How with his gay, capricious curves
Through spring's ambrosial air he swerves
 In freedom mad-delighted;
'And where the droning bee has sipped
He lifts his head, vermilion tipped,
 As if a feast he sighted.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Then with fresh rivalry he sings
Until the very woodland rings
 From minstrelsy in feather;
And when the other carols bring
[Their echo thence, perched listening
 He mocks the vain endeavor.

But just as he a hope elates,
He in a wilful mood migrates
 As would a nymph of laughter;
And passing through the shadowy aisles
Of friendly trees for miles and miles
 Man may not follow after.

THE LITTLE BROWN NUN.

They always wondered at the dreams which lit
The dusk-like, shadow-woven eyes of grey,
 But now they know
 God chose her long ago,
Calling her even from her childish play.
He told her of a theme the heavens sing;
And then the passing of an angel's wing
Darkened those eyes with mystery a bit;
 And they could not
 Fathom her afterthought.

Through sick wards now she passes day by day.
The invalids caress her rosary beads,
 Her ready smile
 Answering each weary wile
And shining on their poverty and needs.
It may be meant for faith or hope or tears
Or all, in truth; but tenderest to fears,
So men learn there to bless a woman's way—
 Sweet little nun!
 Who smiles and passes on.

DOCTOR HOLMES.

"They say that in his prime
Ere the pruning knife of time
Cut him down
Not a better man was found
By the crier on his round
Through the town."

—*Holmes.*

Dear old Autocrat! Your name
Still to precedence has claim,
And we shun
The later poet's themes,
For your song more gracious seems
Gentlest One!

What though his aims be wise
No nearness we surmise
In his powers:
No tenderness is plain
So sensitive of pain
That is ours.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Scorning all pedantic whims
And the arrogance which dims
Honest eyes;
Your heart grew great and leal
For your mission was to heal,
Not despise.

With genial wit akin
To memories that had been
Long ago,
The jocund thought you stirred
But never by a word
Wakened woe.

When last we saw your face,
Shaggy browed, yet with the grace
Of old age,
We thought of many a grief
You were wont by counsel brief
To assuage.

And boasted 'twould be years,
Ere death claimed you; though with fears
Had to cope.
'Twas you who taught us how
Death should find us at the prow
Of our hope.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Singer of a sweet Spring-time!
Poet of a yester's prime!
 When again
Shall we hear such kindly voice
Shall we make such happy choice
 Among men?

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

WHEN DAY IS DONE.

When day is done, how calm the rest
How loved in truth the eventime.
How gently falls the lightest quest,
How soft the distant mellowed chime:
An angel hand writes: "Peace is won,"
On western skies, when day is done.

'And sorrow lays upon her lips
A finger tempering refrain,
'And from our cares the vision slips
Ere we recall our grief again:
For God's own benediction lies
When day is done, on weary eyes.

And blest are they of dreamless sleep
Where every sunbeam steals astray
In silent graves so deep—so deep—
They awe the birds that wing that way;
'And yet it seems each buried one
Must hear his mourner's orison.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

The cricket trebles in the deeps
His reedy notes plebeianized,
The bats his moody vigil keeps
In haunts the bee at noon had prized;
And earth is stilled with heaven near,
When eventide and dreams are here.

"REQUIESCAT IN PACE."

Upon the highest hilltop
Doth it sway,
'A beautiful tall poplar
Glistening gray;
'And 'neath it lies a maiden's
Mouldering clay.

Sometimes a noisy robin
Seeks its shade,
But wings him to his fellows
In the glade,
Because he knows a father
There hath prayed.

There sweep the mists of morning,
And the breeze
Shakes out the tiny raindrops
Through the eves,
'And whispers climb the hillsides
From the seas.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

It is so stilly solemn!
Peace doth brood,
'An Eden peace that chastens
Every mood,
'And beckons angels there
To solitude.

YE OLDEN DAYS.

How sweet it were once more to see,
As light as any bird and free
In the fresh morn, o'er wooded ways
 The maiden of the olden days.
With lightsome form and fair hand slim
Holding above her ankle trim
Beruffled skirt: in no disguise
The coquetry within her eyes,
 And the half shaded, sidelong gaze.

There 'neath the greenwood's kindly shade
Where simple lover vows were made,
I know full well she tried his heart
 With many a stealthy, honeyed dart;
Though bending o'er her tapestry,
Arch innocent, feigned not to see;
And like the bud the wild bee sips
She pursed her dainty, curving lips
 And smiled at him in fond amaze.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

How oft he left in righteous wrath
Frowning his way adown the path;
In sooth it were not fair nor best
To give his loyal love such test;
And yet to see the violet eyes
(Love stars unveiled when Cupid sighs)
He turned again—ah! fatal thought—
He might have known, if he knew aught,
How she could bind him with her gaze.

And when the twilight soft and deep,
Had fallen on the mountain steep;
To see him ride the pathway old
With song majestically bold,
And stop beside the gateway tall,
Just where the ivy hides the wall,
And the pale jasmines interlace;
It must have been their trysting place,
And time has spared it on his ways.

He, springing to the ground, would greet
Milady with a smile so sweet
That chivalry were not amiss,
The while he bended low to kiss

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

The hand so slender, smooth and white,
That in his own 'twas hidden quite;
And then she bids him ride away,
Tho' in her heart she bids him stay,
 So gentle was his knightly praise.

But I would see her later yet,
Bowing the stately minuet,
In cream brocade and powdered curls,
 And soft fair throat clasped round with pearls;
And o'er her cheeks the roses blown.
Oh, the light time she must have known!
In the wide halls and drawing rooms
In the glad morn and twilight glooms,
 The maiden of the olden days.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

JEAN INGELow.

May 15th, 1897.

There breathes about the evening of her life
A chaste serenity—the dusk of years,
That fills the soul with passive retribute
For any grief that harbored peace in tears.

Still doth she smile unconscious, deep-welled love,
Though long immute her first great eager
themes;
Still are there cradled fancies in the eyes
That sought the ocean cliffs and dreamed fond
dreams.

The world has nigh forgotten that she lives;
But in some hearts, remote, the seeds are sown
Which spread from words that blossomed into
fame
With sudden vigor when her power was known.

A citadel of dreams she bides within,
With scenes and friends 'twas not our lot to
know;
Thus can she sacrifice our scanty praise,
Gleaning 'mid triumphs of the long ago.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Tarry, ye listless passers by, and muse
 Upon this woman's life so pure and great,
Whose humblest songs had still enough of love
 Some vague, unwritten joy to consecrate.

HARVEST SONG.

The lurid sun breaks on the east,
 Heigho! Heigho!
The field birds' callings are increased,
 Heigho! Heigho!
Now forth to harvest we must go;
And reap and gather row by row
With never a cooling breeze to blow,
 Heigho! Heigho!

Wild poppies smile amid the wheat,
 Heigho! Heigho!
But droop ere noon by scythe and heat,
 Heigho! Heigho!
Afar the voices mingle low,
Now cheery, now subdued and slow,
Like a rivulet's uneven flow,
 Heigho! Heigho!

The sun is low against the west,
 Heigho! Heigho!
Each swain finds her he loves the best,
 Heigho! Heigho!

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

And where is Bessie gone?—and Joe?
They passed this way an hour ago.
The frightened meadow larks may know,
Heigho! Heigho!

TO LUCINIUS.

Translation from Horace.

Lucinius! Life will brighter seem to thee
If thou on shore not all ambitions burn,
Nor yet lose listlessly in open sea
The tideways of return.

Still to be loved! And being loved still praised:
A golden mean in all thy fortunes keep;
On sordid pride the hand of envy lays
Its maledictions deep.

For tallest trees are shaken by the wind,
And proudest mountains leveled to the plain—
Forbear! High towers fall with a force designed
While modest walls remain.

So keep thy mind well balanced. Hope will gleam
And beckon when adversity is guest;
And fear shall follow gladness like a dream
In shadowy unrest.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

If in thy heart the pain of loss is sharp,
The darkest hour shall pass—forgotten so.
Apollo wakes the muse upon the harp,
Nor always bends the bow.

Be then courageous in infirmity,
And shorten sails when wings of victory lift;
That with the passing of success to lea
Thou shalt not lie adrift.

CHRYSANTHEMUM TIME.

Chrysanthemum time is here again;
 The world is brown,
 'And thro' the town
Stray wisps of leaves are eddied low.
But near each frosted window pane
These tousled heads look out and bow
 To those who pass
 The crystal glass,
Where they for weeks have longed to show.

Fair maidens down the wide street come
 With color blown
 '(A bloom their own)
Across the cheeks of tender mold.
A huge inert chrysanthemum
Lies on each breast against the cold.
 Were mortal blest
 With such a rest
I fear they would not thus be dumb.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

I saw a sweet-faced woman clasp
 A little child
 Who upward smiled,
And said, "Pleath, lady, div me one."
She gave him all his arms could grasp,
And standing, wistful, sent him on;
 But who shall say
 What yearnings lay
Along the way the child had passed.

Men in the twilight pacing slow,
 Complacently,
 Smile when they see
These flowers that meant so much to them,
Perhaps—oh, full a year ago!
And while their folly they condemn,
 A score or more
 Like those she wore
Send home—for old love's sake, you know.

Dear, shaggy faced chrysanthemums.
 Here, everywhere,
 You nod and stare!
Not too poor for the palace halls,
Nor too rich for the city slums—
You are like Him who loves us all,

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

You come to cheer
When skies are drear,
Thrice lovable chrysanthemums.

THE RETURN.

Lo! after years of silence you have come,
The morn was grey as any morn has been;
How could I know the evening would bring in
A friend whose generous greetings long were
dumb?

The time had sped that marks the blossomy
spring;
But when the blithe old garden smiled in June
And drowsed in its exuberance of bloom,
I missed the hope it all was wont to bring.

And winter sends you back: words ill express
The welcome your divining heart must know,
My good Samaritan of long ago!
How you had sinned ere I could love you less.

So you are come to counsel just as then,
To toss my books or whet an argument
With spicy incivilities well meant—
What joy it is to have you here again!

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Come, sit beside me near the oak wood blaze—
Here where the light may shine upon your face,
The while in every lineament I trace
What I so loved in days ago to praise.

UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

"The heir with roses in his shoes
That night might village partner choose."

—*Scott.*

Oh, the merry, merry yuletides
Of the golden long ago,
When they hung above the holly
Intertwined with mistletoe;
When their hearts were gay and careless—
Were they gay and careless—quite?
Or was it, dear, they masked their hearts
To laugh on Christmas night?

The old folks bowed the guests within,
With faces lit with love,
[(For any one that entered there
Must hope and valor prove).
'A smile that once was wond'rous sweet
Played softly round their lips,
'As when to an abstraction fleet,
The soul unwary slips.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

La Belle Lisette, so lithe and fair,
Was then a sad coquette,
And with her artful witcheries
She made her lovers fret;
Until within her fickle heart
Love's shaft of sunshine fell,
And what she vowed 'neath mistletoe
Her yellow letters tell.

Sir Godfrey, with his smooth fine chin,
Set in a high cravat,
And waistcoat frilled with snowy lace—
A real aristocrat—
He joined them, too, and led the dance,
And quothe he, bowing low,
"Methinks I'd win my yule blown rose
Beneath the mistletoe."

'Ay, every fond enamored lass
Did love the mistletoe,
Propriety did bend and smile
Upon his cupid foe;
When madcap Nell and pet Louise,
With velvet Knights and tall,
Came filing down the festooned stair,
And to the banquet hall.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

And many and many a year has passed,
With lilac ladened spring,
'And many a summer gives sweet song
To make the woodland ring;
But Christmas, with its holly boughs,
And clustering mistletoe,
Brings with it like a sweeter dream
A thought of them you know.

THE FIRST SNOW.

How silently it falls!

No lightning flash—no sweep of thunders loud;
Yet doth it cover moor and field; and shroud
Our dead again in one all-folding sheet!
Then when the moon rides thro' the blurring fleet
Of midnight clouds, the white-robed sceptre trees
(Whose winnowed wealth sequesters in the leas)
Shake wild avenging arms; and seem to heap
Weird maledictions on the world in sleep.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

“ 'TIS TRUE, 'TIS PITY.”

(With apology to the few exceptions who are creditable.)

Ah-h-h, are you in society?
For we must with propriety
Distinguish that variety
 With every sacred law.
But really, though your face is fine,
Your pedigree I do opine
Is not of an ancestral line
 Like ours in Omaha.

Exclusive?—Well, I rather guess
That's what we are—er, more or less!
Since only those of smart address
 Are given any heed:
We read all books writ in our day—
What Carlyle says?—don't tell, I pray,
'Twas something stupid, I dare say.
 Carlyle we never read.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

We are not to a great extent
A brilliant set; but we have sent
Our boys to college. They have "went"
And learned a wondrous lot.
When they come home with tangled hair,
And eastern ways and worried air,
Olympus' sons could not compare
In feats that they've been taught.

Our forefathers—the dear old bats—
With buckled shoes and frilled cravats,
B'Jove! they were aristocrats
In their day—don't you know.
Here are their portraits, every one,
From noble sire to nobler son—
Why, yes, of course, we had them done
In Rome a year ago.

'And have you seen our golfing grounds?
Our very latest notion. Zounds!
[(That word from the old playwright sounds
As if 'twere made for airs.)]
The secret of our regal sway
Is simply this: we rarely pay
Our bills. Forsooth, we're too blasé
For such plebeian cares.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

And soon, perchance, we'll ride to chase
With hounds unloosed in eager pace;
We'll stretch across the wildest place
E'en though such splendor shocks
Those poor untutored wayside men
Who ne'er will see such like again—
Nor dream patrician dreams. But then—
I say, who'll buy the fox?

Ye Gods! what sorry truths reveal
The vanities these people feel
Who, like the fly on Aesop's wheel
Say, "My, what dust I raise!"
Oh, give to us a respite blessed,
We bore it long—here is the test—
And now we beg a little rest,
In idle summer days.

AGED FIVE.

What is he like? Ah, dear heart, who knows,
With his questioning eyes and saucy nose,
With round cherub face that is always alive
To things which happen along the drive—
What is he like, save a boy of five?

The grave tiny maids at the window frame
In the house across, when first he came,
Sat thoughtful in council the whole day through
Deciding, at last that a baby new
Had come from Heaven: we thought so, too.

What is he like? A wee renegade
They dropped from the stars,—the same who
made
The angels long for the far away earth,
The home that would know his laughter and worth
Where love and hope had decreed his birth.

LILACS.

Oh, rare and pure, and too, too happy flowers!
With tumbled bells that lilt a thousand hopes,
Advancing timid Spring upon the slopes—
I love you for your hint of hidden powers;
But most I love you for another thing
More sweet to me than even you and spring.

CREATION.

Our love remakes the old, old world,
Reveals the welkin zone,
And spills across the midnight vault
The myriad stars thick-sown.
The violets hint that earth is pulsed
Through all its veins with youth,
And warmed and formed and born anew
With some diviner truth.

The rubies, sunk a million years
In clarifying red,
Have yielded from their hidden mines
A chaplet for your head.
And gleaning thro' the birch tree aisles
The thrush and oriole
Feel love transcend their 'wildering psalm
And make their matin whole.

Beloved come! Time has passed down
The channel of his cares—
Beloved come! lest life eke out
Some sorrow unawares.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

The opal clouds do bend to touch
The mountains of the east,
Beloved come! day heralds in
A joy-thrilled bridal feast.

VENICE.

What varied charm, fair city of the seas,
Intones thy name with drowsy murmurings;
What buried claim, what pean of dead bells
O'er the imaginative heart still flings
A theme of glory brighter than hath been
Since royal pageants swept the ducal halls;
Since, love-mad in a jocund revelry,
The Carnival hath echoed through thy walls.

In yonder bell tower rising to the skies,
Whose turret caught the morning's early beams,
'A golden chalice offering the day
And burnished now with evening's dying gleams,
Did Galileo woo the summer night,
And in bewildered rapture often trod
Along the pathway of the silent stars,
And rested on the bosom of his God.

Here flutters still the veil of Jessica
And sly Iago wends his crafty way:
Romance is in each shadow thrown at eve,
And history blended with each scene at day.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

There still is shown above the placid waves
The balcony where Desdemona leaned
Ere yet the frowning Moor had filled his soul
With bitter thoughts his jealousy had gleaned.

'Tis Byron's Venice! On its lonely shore
His genius from its lethargy awoke,
And to a distant land and distant king
His fretful soul in brooding accents spoke.
And even now, as when he praised her walls,
St. Mark's Byzantine splendor still is shown—
St. Mark's that knelled the Doge to his tomb
And proudly made the new successor known.

And where the paler moonlight doth enrich
The loggia wide and graceful balustrade,
It needs not much to hear again the sound
Of soft guitar and plaintive serenade:
'Till there a face betrays its sweet amaze,
And a low voice is whispering replies—
A world of witchery on the smiling lips,
A gentle melancholy in the eyes.

Perhaps it was upon a fête day once
When masqueraders fled amid the throng,
And young and old closed in upon their way
'Till echoed far and wide their mirthful song:

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

'Twas then, I say, with a momentous thrill
The fair Inamorato saw below
Her lover there, and scarce suppressed her tears
When he passed, and did not seem to know.

But still she kissed a rose and threw it down,
And, anxious, looked to see it live or crush,
As eagerly he pressed it to his lips
And backward glanced to see her happy blush.
Ah, idle dreams! that have their best abode
Where love and power have reigned so mightily—
Sleep, Venice; dream! though waking bringeth
 pain

Thou art not ours but what our fancies be.

In medieval days thou wert more fair
But not so lovely as thou art to me,
For Time that laid thy noble rulers low
Hath left its tender memories to thee.
'Till I, grown weary of a saddened world,
Find here a respite languorous and sweet,
And catching up the burden of thy song,
"Santa Lucia" dreamily repeat.

SPEAKING OF MEMOIRS.

Once did a man his day dreams sketch
 'Tween covers finger worn,
'And here and there in grudging haste
 A haunting leaf was torn.

He traced the story of his life
 From unresponsive years;
'A shaft of sunshine on the page
 Oft dissipated tears.

In catacombs of buried joys
 He lost the light of day,
'And told his heart,—celebrity
 Such broodings would repay.

Ay! every dream had record there:
 Existence meant for him
Searching along with the torchlight hope
 Through aisles of memory dim.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Then lovingly he read them o'er—
Each fame-portending page:
His retrospections paid him well—
The book hath lain an age.

The book hath lain an age. In dust
The parchment falls away
As doth a shroud from mouldering bones,
As doth a flower to clay.

Yet it hath served as well as those
In ivory vellum bound:
A memoir is but fossiled pride,
And never sought: 'tis found.

MORNING GLORIES.

My Marion, when she lived, so loved these
flowers:

There's many must remember how she tripped
Each morning when they all hung rainy-dripped
Across the meadow to the heather bowers,
Where sinking sadly from the midnight showers
They hung storm beaten in the early hours;

Until the sunlight or my Marion came
And lifted them to their accustomed place,
Where they would twine again, and interlace,
And bear quite proudly their old-fashioned name:
Their rainbow colors flaunting with such claim
The paler, pining harebells drooped for shame.

And sometimes she would place them in her hair
[(Purple and gold in royal challenging),
A lovelier crown no courtier could bring:
Then she would come to meet me, not a care
Upon the upturned face so young and fair,
Nor in the eyes which held me captive there.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

But that was long ago! Sweet Marion wed
I knew not whom nor made a single quest,
But then a song had died within my breast.
From every scene of boyhood hope I fled,
Yet did forgive. And when my love lay dead
These blossoms kissed again her sunny head.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

Tell me, gaudy butterfly,
Are you happier than I?
Prisoner, you must tell me why.

I would know before you wing,
What is earth's most treasured thing,
What it is the robins sing.

Tell me what has sweetest been,
On the banks or in the glen,
And I'll let you fly again.

Not so quick! You'll bruise this gold
Laid upon you, fold on fold—
In your bondage you're too bold.

There's your tree—the hollow lime,
Where the honeysuckles climb;
There you've idled many a time.

And the lily's nectarous depths,
Where the sunlight's gold has crept,
And the dews of night have slept.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Where the brier rose scents the brink,
And the lazy woodbirds drink,
You were tardy, too, I think.

What is it that is so dear,
Bringing all of you each year
Out of nowhere into here?

God hath made you just for this,
Fluttering—fluttering, kiss for kiss,
Wild with sweets—a flower is bliss.

Downy, soulless butterfly,
Quaffing joys from field and sky,
Are you happier than I?

Go! you'll not reveal a thing,
And you tear your restless wing
With your wilful fluttering.

GERTRUDE.

"Who never ate his bread with tears."
—Goethe.

That day stands out against the curtained past
Of years enrolled to silence, as if classed
Not only with what was, but what will be
And ever is: the thought checks gaiety
And holds glad moments with suspended breath—
The thought that stays the memory of her death.

They laid her down amid the daffodils
That glow and brighten on the western hills;
Where in December sinks, untracked, the snow,
Where, in the first months early violets blow;
Where summer starlight lingers lovingly—
The virgin starlight not more chaste than she.

Oh, the dear laugh we missed those darkest days,
The eyes so wistful in their love always!
The slender hands that feebler—feebler grew,
And lay inert at last. Death was kind, too,
And left her calm and beautiful and fair:
How could we grudge her to God's holier care?

AN OLD INKSTAND.

Herewith dear memories dwell,
As of some old familiar friend
Who knows whereto my thoughts extend;
Who lives in that interior
Of wordless hopes and dreams that war
The heart's own citadel.

The monogram's bright glow
Hath long been blurred by rust and blot,
A gift from—whom it matters not.
The little polished love beside
Hath lost his wings: do not deride,
He cannot vanish so.

Thus had it chance to learn
Of moods and means the stolid trend;
That truth and idle words contend;
That thoughts, fresh when the pen is dipped,
Away inconstantly have slipped
And take uncertain turn.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Ah! very like a friend.
It knows the hidden folded scroll,
The records of a hurried soul,
And o'er the thoughts of other years
The lines are traced in slow arrears.
Which typify the end.

THE EDELWEISS.

High up above the haunts of fevered men,
As if some angel sought its pure repose,
And near to heaven as thing of earth may be,
The Edelweiss blooms in the Alpine snows.
As soft and velvety its stainless white
(And they say, too, who live below, as cold),
Howbeit, 'tis the emblem of young love,
Cloud-kissed and rare the flower doth unfold.

The slow unlettered herdsman hath no skill
To tell the love to which his life doth cleave;
He knows the song his heart sings all day long,
And that the words are fettered there at eve.
There's not a bird that carols to the morn,
There's not a bee which sips the sweetened rose,
Nor anything in nature's noble realm
But seems to him his deep love to disclose.

And often when the Alpine evening wanes,
The musing swain looks up with tender eyes,
Marvels how much his life might still contain
If, when the morning mellowed in the skies,
(65).

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

His hand might pluck this blossom of the snows.

 In truth they say it hath so strange a claim
It wins the maid whose heart had else been cold
 If it be found and given in her name.

Precipitous, alas! the mighty peaks

 So delicately poised, that but the stride
Of some light erring foot doth often send
 An avalanche adown the mountain side.
And here it grows! What brooding poet gave
 The pure significance it proudly bears,
There where the mountaineer may search in vain,
 There high above men's murmurings and cares.

BABY MARY.

Baby Mary,
Like a fairy,
Very sweet and good,
Comes to meet me,
Love and greet me
In the maple wood.

Baby Mary,
Like a fairy,
Very bold and rude,
When I doubt her,
Calls about her
Sorrows—such a brood.

Baby Mary,
Weary—very,
Slumbers in a mood,
Lost completely,
Smiles most sweetly,
Thus are angels wooed.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

IN MEMORIAM.

(To Catherine Dalton Swift.)

How shall we bear the coming of the May,
The advent of the violet crownèd spring?
How watch the setting sun in day's decline,
And feel not you recalled in everything?

How bear the echo of a careless laugh,
And hear not yours in stifling back a sob;
How walk unbowed, unsorrowsd o'er the way,
Which you in joy and youth and hope have trod?

Our lips refuse to form the farewell words,
Our arms stretch out your pulseless form to keep,
But silently you lie, still folded eyed,
And seem unheeding in your tranquil sleep.

Sleep, gentle One: nor would we wish to wake
Your patient being to our strife and sin:
The laurels shall be fresh upon your brow,
Which we through fears and years have yet to
win.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

For well! I know that where the angels lean
Above the parapets of azure skies,
A soul was gladdened in the light of morn,
And welcomed to a restful paradise.

And when the golden glowing day is done,
You will be watchful as your loved ones come;
As reapers leave their fields and journey on
To seek their places in a higher home.

WILD ROSES.

Dew mellowed emblems of the May,
What rare perfection lies
In faint hued leaves that lure away
The blush from morning skies;
And fold each slanting evening ray
Within your golden eyes.

Now Silas treads the white roadsides
That wind among the hills:
For him a darling maiden bides,
Behind the still old mills;
And stooping in his awkward strides,
His great rough hand he fills.

Then when he turns him home, the way
Is dark and sweet. The stir
Of incense on the beaten bray
'Minds him of words that were:
His heart bows low to mutely pray
For worthiness of her.

THE MOTHER.

She is so little to have such a care,
And far too timid to have people stare:
She only tightens round her the old shawl,
And bites her lips a moment—that is all.

They say her son was hanged for some great crime,
And that she thought him guiltless all the time;
But sealed her lips, and labors—labors still,
With the grim silence of a hopeless will.

To her he was a little fellow yet—
And they have wronged him: but she must forget.
Her face grows sterner, and her eyes grow dull—
How can the passers tell her heart is full?

Heaven awaits her; and we cannot know
But what she'll meet him there: she loved him so.

A DREAM DAY.

Let us go forth to the old wood,
Where oaks the storms of years have stood;
Their russet trunks with moss o'erlaid,
The white thorn blossoming in the shade.
We'll steal from time a truant day,
As winsome as the early May,
Mature as summer's fruitful prime,
And golden as the autumn time.

Let us go forth! And thou and I
Shall greet the morn, ere yet the sky
Is mellowed from its transient hue,
Into a fairer deepening blue.
Why, in these later years it seems
The springtime lost its happiest dreams
Through sterner moods; but just to-day
The birds will sing their old-time lay.

Let us go forth! Illusions bring,
A peace that seraphs may not sing;
On, on into the summer noon,
And reach the prime (perhaps too soon)'.
(72)

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

There shall we find the fern wreathed brook,
And thou shalt read thy favored book—
A summer rest for thee and me,
Just as of yore 'twas wont to be.

Let us go forth when day is done,
And early sinks the autumn sun,
Through fields where unbound wheat doth lie,
Where poppies droop and swallows fly;
And in the forest deeps grown sear,
(For the sake of years that have been dear),
Thou'lt say as in that happy past,
Thou lovest but me—the first—the last.

EVENING ON THE RESERVATION.

Across the banners of the sinking sun
A wild goose wings its solitary flight;
And o'er the trackless sand the wolf dogs run
 Shaggy and hungered toward a wigwam light.

The day is done; but still the glimmering rays
 Burn on the cactus edge; and high and drear
The death cry of the Indian haunts the ways—
 Long drawn, remote; it chides the listening ear.

Oh, weariness of time upon the plains!
 Oh, stolid life that recks not what it hath!
A pale moon like a desert friend remains
 To guide my steps along the darkened path.

SHELL SECRETS.

Low murmuring shell, what hue is thine,
Didst steal at eventide
The soft tints of the crested waves
That in a moment died?
Or was it from the coral beds,
Or was it from the rose,
Or from, perchance, some fairy flower
That in the great deep blows?

Low murmuring shell, what voice is thine
That doth mine ear immerge?
Is it the seagull's note subdued
Or mourning Neptune's dirge?
Is it the mermaids' olden theme
Of siren sorcery,
Or is it but the shipman's song
Still echoing o'er the sea?

For once, the drowsy mysteries give
That lay these countless years
Beneath the cries of stricken hope
And grief-baptizing tears.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Hast thou not heard the tidings borne
From the complaining earth,
And tossed upon the maddened waves
When signs of life were dearth?

Have trembling vows, in last farewell,
Been plighted here unheard,
And have the slumbering ages ne'er
Responding cadence stirred?
Soft! if thou art so grandly dumb
I'll whisper fears of mine,
And they will bear with secret woes
The plenitude of thine.

“COME UNTO ME.”

So poor the Master is, He hideth where
His poor may come. And lo! these thousand
years

He gives to them a Saviour's chastening tears,
And tender, mystic smile. In sorrowed prayer
They kiss His hands, and lean upon His heart;
And the great world—more poor indeed than
they—

Crowds outward to the open, sunlit way:
How knows the world to choose the better part?

So rich the Master is, His love will place
A chaplet of rare pearls upon their heads;
And blossoming beneath like lily beds
Their rosaries will seem to interlace.
Oh, weary eyes that read by tapers dim!
Oh, hungry lips remembering His thirst!
You in His kingdom shall be praised the first—
Thrice blessed souls—what heritage with Him!

THE HUDSON.

From mountainous declivities
The Hudson floweth down,
And smiles at dawn and hurries on
When twilight wears a crown.
Pride of the sleeping centuries
And prehistoric grown!

The stern browed peaks frown to its depths
But still parental rise,
And threat the leaden rolling clouds
Like armies in the skies,
And lull to rest in awful hours
The buried chieftain's cries.

Trees in o'erhanging eminence
Their splendors lavish here,
What are the mellowed red and gold
But thus to crown the year;
And bear him down in royal robes
Upon such honored bier.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

We even pass—vain short-lived men
Like gnats before a light—
Subjects of blame or care or fame
We drift into the night;
It furrows still through cliff and hill
In immemorial quiet.

GETHSEMANE.

He passed into the heavy night
Soul-sick, aweary, lone;
The man-God with earth's myriad cares
Weighing against his own.

A grey mist wrapped the desert stars,
Seaward the waves were still,
'And in the flowering date no stir
Told of the night wind's chill.

Yet on the dust His brow was pressed,
And angels saw Him brood,
While from His feeble heart there flowed
The chalice of His blood.

The thought's too great! Our minds do err.
We sleep with all the world!
Forget us not, great prostrate King!
Thy people are imperiled.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Forget us not. E'en though we sleep,
And Peter mocks Thy Name,
The morning is at hand when we
Shall read again our shame.

When we shall read it on Thy cross;
Within Thy upturned eyes;
And in the heart that pleadeth still
And drips—and drips—and dies.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

TO MOTHER BERCHMAN.

Jubilee Poem.

"Who bides his time—he tastes the sweet
Of honey in the saltiest tear."

God called her long ago, when life was keen
Upon the path of hopeful beckonings:
She had not tasted failure in the things
Youth deems the best. So when her choice was
seen
They even, who had graver steps imperiled,
Marveled she asked so little of the world.

She chose the lonely way but few may pass—
So near to Christ they almost touch His hands;
So dear to Christ that no one understands,
Who dreams apart from them. How can the mass
Of watchers read His eyes, Whose downward
gaze
Seeks only those that kneel in prayer and praise.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Yet we, though far in grace, are near in love;
And learn much from her dignity of mind,
And this: that it is better to be kind.

It seems she always knew us—always strove
To think of us at best. So we are come
And feel that being with her we are home.

What can we tell of her? For all is wrought
Upon her Master's heart; and who shall take
From Him the cross she carried for His sake:
The smiles when all went well, the tears which
brought
Her forth to faith! Oh, each day's work and will
The Bridegroom knew, but waiteth—waiteth still.

Dear Mother! Retrospection joins our hands
Across the distant past. Let us forget
We might have kinder been; and then regret
Shall counsel future years. And when the sands
Of time drift low, still have a tender prayer
For those who left the threshold of your care.

JASPER'S LEAP.

When Jasper leaped with wild desire
Amid the British cannon fire,
And placed their flag where it should be
Above a rag of destiny;
What cries rang out with wilder cheers
And woke the dead, and gave them ears!
Why, faces dull in death before,
Smiled at the rallying once more:
In dying eyes upraised and dim
He read how comrades envied him.

Not that the hero was alone—
But only first. Men had not known
There was such joy in dying, 'till
Their ensign lay displaced and still.
Then, if their thousand hearts were met
By ball and glistening bayonet
They would have rushed upon their doom
To save their colors from the gloom.
Thus brave men die upon our sod—
Thus love of country cries to God.

SONNETS.



Beatrice Cenci

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

BEATRICE CENCI.

With backward gaze upon a passing world
Where love and name and beauty were imperiled,
The tender mysticism of the eyes,
A depth of torn affection still implies;
And half reveals their pleading to the throng
And half conceals their history of wrong:
Yet raising the ecstatic poet's soul
To thirsting transports knowing no control.
Those mobile lips were surely made to smile
(And so he thinks in musing there the while)
A curve that might have been a smile amiss
Lies like the shadow of a half-won kiss;
And, oh, that brow! o'er which for days to brood,
And madden him in yearning solitude.

AT EVEN SONG.

It is the hour which lulls the dying day
When still the coral streaks the sombre grey;
When still the amber beams above the way
The sun hath ta'en: just ere the birds are stilled,
But with a burst of farewell notes are filled.
When moderating beauty oft hath thrilled
The artist soul. Alack! a truant wren,
At eventide returning to the glen,
Hath sent his fellows twittering again.
Then from the gateway of the beaten path
Floats down to me the merry milkmaid's laugh;
What pretty ways the rustic sweetheart hath.
The single star that trembles thro' the mist
Reminds the tardy loved one of her tryst.

THE RETURN OF MAY.

Sweet Virgin May! with nature's hidden charms
Beneath thy raiment of celestial white,
Thou, blushing with the knowledge of thy right
To bear them, smiling, in thy tender arms.
Thine ear must hear the secrets of each flower
That trembles ere it blows upon thy breast;
Thine eyes must see that birdlings have their nest
In sheltering crannies from the early shower.
And thou wilt laugh with Laura as she saves
Her dandelions to wreath her grandma's head;
And thou wilt walk with Grief as she doth tread
In sorrow bowed amid the blossomy graves.
Sweet Virgin May! with countless beauties
bound—
Queenly at day, at night all starry crowned.

THE ELDERBERRY.

Field loving flower of misty, milky white,
The sunshade of some fairy dost thou seem:
Flouncing above the shadows of some stream
And trellised gaily with the morning light.
The butterflies, all joyous, flutter there
In mottled splendor, sipping sweets by stealth;
At which the bee drones o'er its honey wealth
And reels and circles in the noonday air,
And ever wings away but to return,
Asserting prestige where these idlers be,
Pillaging summer nectar wantonly.
At length its rightful ownership they learn
And hasten from such grumbling, while the birds
Tell of the conquest to far grazing herds.

"MYSTICAL ROSE."

Mystical Rose! blown on the world's dark breast
And nurtured in this fretful vale of tears,
With grace in challenge to thy own sweet fears
And heart, anticipating, bowed and blessed.
Thy fragrance incensed the blue spreading skies
And crownèd angels bending near the throne
Did plead to name and bless thee as their own,
And carry thee afar to Paradise.
So we, bereaved in sorrow's deepest hour,
Thro' Christ and Bethlehem still call to thee
For solace in embittered misery,
For some reprieve from a dreaded Power.
And thou, our Queen, all purity and love,
Dost ever bend to bless us from above.

AN OLD ROSE JAR.

It stands breast high upon a quaint old shelf
Of rare mahogany uniquely carved;
And from its height the morning rays are barred
As if it chose the sombre nook itself.
A rose jar! with the scent of crushed perfumes
As soft as oriental spices waft,
As rich as oriental nectars quaffed.
The grandame says her choicest bridal blooms
Had petals sifted in among the leaves;
And then there comes the breath of lily tips
With field flowers kissed by buried baby lips:
A rose so blessed still for her laughter grieves—
A precious incense permeating themes
Of consecrated love, and vanished themes.

ABSENT.

Still you're away. I'm almost weary now
Peering adown the path at eventide;
'Twas thus you said you'd wish to claim your
 bride

Where first was breathed and blessed our early
 vow.

And here you said I must be watching, too,
When you would come athwart the twilight skies;
But often, dear, the distance cheats my eyes,
And all the dread forebodings start anew.
The thrushes wing about the old retreat,
And from the crannies twitter to the morn,
The clematis the grey walls doth adorn,
And every vesper chiming falls as sweet.
Yet musing here on you and them I prove
Full many a time that absence deepens love.

KING CARNIVAL.

King Carnival is growing old,
He leans aweary on his staff,
And scarcely hears his jester's laugh—
Now that the world is strange and cold.
The rose-wreathed cup of ancient ine
Has bitterness in its last dregs;
And for our tolerance he begs
Who once was King when kings did shine.
Men are not lost to jocund mirth
And festive ribbons breezed along,
Or violets pelted to the throng
As when he revelled o'er the earth.
And round him sinks the pageant's mold—
For Carnival is growing old!

A REVERY.

It was in June. Hebe's sweet negligence
Had strewn with countless blossoms all the plain—
Had borne her messages of faith again
In dead oblivion to the recompense
Her wanton hopes must make in after days.
All this we knew. Spring hath a mild deceit,
A tender way of dreaming dreams replete
Alike a maid who muses and delays.
But yet, as it was need, we said farewell
Even when earth was gladdest with her song,
And every note was full intoned and strong
As from a fairy laurelled bridal bell,

* * * * *

The years since then have made a goodly lapse—
Some day we'll meet again—perhaps, perhaps.

GOLDEN ROD.

In hazy August noons it shares the power
Of quickened growth soothed by the evening dews
That thro' the morning's sun and shadow ooze,
And mint into a royal gold this flower.
Then doth it crown the dusty roadside, where
All other blossoms parched and pleading lie,
And triumphs in the heat that bids them die.
While in the current of the withering air
Its soft plumes flaunt; and, kingly, doth it say:
"Behold I lead an army that will come
And crimson all the hilltops, and smite dumb
The last surviving shrubs in the affray;
Among the trampled and the thousand slain,
The Troubadours of Autumn will remain."

THE MARSEILLES HYMN.

I thought I heard a million voices break
In one accord to swell this battle hymn!
I thought the myriad visages grew grim
And blood-veined eyes their vengeful fires did
wake;

That every heart impatient for relief
Shook off the chains of bondage. There is none
So strong as slaves when freedom may be won—
No despotism like that galled by grief.

* * * * *

Did Liberty infuse into this song
A heaven peace surcharged still with contempt?
And picture hope which only madmen dreamt,
With promptings of the damned to urge along—
Oh! was it thus—Or but the voice of one
Goaded to triumph and inspired alone!

SUNSET AT NAPLES.

The day sinks silently thro' vaporous aisles
Of molten pearl and hazing amethyst;
While still a blaze of ruby thro' the mist
Burns outward to the shore for lengthening miles.
The hues spilled gorgeously along the skies
To opal turn; as nestling to the sun
The wimpling waves go circling one by one,
And all the soul is weightied with its sighs.

Oh, never artist gave such beauteous scene:
Nor poet satisfied his striving brain
With fitting words that splendor to explain—
Yon setting sun that crowns the ocean Queen.
With westward gaze upon the closing gleams
We float—and float in sweet Arcadian dreams.

WITH WILHEMINA.

When Wilhemina pours the tea
My thoughts brood o'er the mystery
 Of wilful wiles and sunlit smiles
 And pensive eyes where laughter lies.
For each mood shows antipathy
To that portrayed before, you see.

When Wilhemina pours the tea
There's none seems so demure as she:
 Her fingers seek the clear beleek
 While her brows press down a dainty frown;
'Till I would prison her dear hand
And from her love's long debt demand

When Wilhemina pours the tea
And finds me watching dreamily,
 Her eyes dance with a dauntless glance,
 And challenge seems to light sly gleams,
Ere sternness darkens thro' and thro'
Those orbs of deepest sapphire blue.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

When Wilhemina pours the tea
And hands the steaming cup to me,
Her eyes sweep low, and then I trow
Her downward gaze would vie in praise
With Saint Cecilia's modest plea
For sufferance to piety.

As Wilhemina pours the tea,
And I sit looking fancy free,
I think how sweet 'twould be to greet
This darling one when day is done:
My home should be my shrine, and she/
Would be my heart's divinity.

And who would not most envied be
As Wilhemina's vis-a-vis?
And what of years and what of tears
'There is no care but love may share.
These thoughts come to my dreams and me
As Wilhemina pours the tea.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

IN BLOSSOM TIME.

And in the hedgeway is the wild rose come,
And in the birch, gay robin builds a home;
The mountain stream tells how the heaven smiles—
The same stream that an eagle wooed for miles.
Yes, Time has led his loved one—Spring—apart,
But all the world betrays his throbbing heart.

A TWILIGHT SONG.

White cottage in the ivy vines,
Did she forget
Whom here I met?
Here where the deep wisteria twines
And hollyhocks in martial lines
Mark where we lingered our adieu,
And she reached out a blossom blue,
All dewy wet—
Does she forget?

Oh, tell her by the purpled hedge
I now await
My springtime mate.
What is to me the trellised edge,
If I hear not again her pledge?
And what to me the twilight skies,
Without the dusk of her sweet eyes?
Oh, say I wait,
Insatiate!

THE STORY OF A HOME.

Dear old home! all ivy grown and still,
And solitary 'mid ancestral trees,
What rural rests, what beaten paths were these
Where sire and son have wandered at their will.

The rose vine, now untrained, shuts out the sun
From moulding windows closed this many a
year,
And mosses o'er the sunken stones appear
To show where slow decadence has begun.

As yet the path leads to the riverside,
Where berried sumach reddens on the slope,
And in its crimsoning would seem to cope
With hues that are the maple's autumn pride.

Great guarding elms shade the rustic seat
Where dainty Ethel stitched the linen's edge,
And chattered to the magpies at the hedge,
Until they fluttered from their best retreat.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

But all is silent browed as yon churchyard:
The wild flowers thicken o'er the gravelled way,
The rooks' old nests are tenantless and grey,
And fall anon upon the turfed sward.

Why, there was once a time—they knew it well—
When jovial folk found such a welcome here,
The manor had grown famous for its cheer;
And friends had reminiscences to tell

Of early rides and heavy snow-bound sleighs,
And afterwards of generous greetings where
The warm light flooded to the oaken stair,
And showed within the forest logs ablaze.

One hears, too, of a prodigal's return
In yule time, when the holly boughs were hung;
How far along the winter night they sung
And watched the embers into ashes burn.

This son died young: you still may find his name
(If you will lift the jasmine vines away),
Deep chiseled in the stone. His mother lay
Beside him ere the summer thrushes came.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Two girls were left. In varied silent ways
 (Like the twin spirits, Condolence and Love,
 Whose mission is approved by smiles above),
They cheered their venerable father's days.

The memory of his hopes was in his home;
 For Sarah there some thirty years had known.
 Ethel was eighteen—like a blossom blown
To bring back springtime to an autumn loam.

While Sarah made for gravity defense
 And with maternal airs advanced her age;
 Sweet Ethel knew no dignity to gauge
The winning artless grace of innocence.

Sarah was staid and kind. She loved to share
 Her sister's life of blithesome vagary;
 Though still she kept the girlish beauty free
From any touch of worriment and care.

So Ethel's hair was plaited in soft braids,
 And was at night brushed out in vainest way
 Where, falling far below her waist, it lay
Rippling and twirling in relieved cascades.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Or it was bound, beribboned and brought high
As in the portrait of some grandame fair,
When she assumed the artful lady's air,
And smiled to hear her sister's humble sigh.

There is in girls a pretty vanity
Which challenges reproach, and rather seems
To win forgiveness for noonday dreams,
And castles where their first awak'nings be.

Thus Ethel's conscious way could not offend;
For any childing word of just rebuke
Was softened to a smile of love, in sooth
That carelessness should every mood attend.

To Sarah's tolerant ear she'd ever say:
"I'll marry rich and build our fortunes high,
My rebel soul for eminence doth sigh":
Then she would laugh. 'Twas easy to be gay.

Her conquests still the villagers will tell
(The older ones gone past their vintage years,
And chafing time for all its dull arrears,
By summoning these memories to dwell).

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

'And scarce a week ago as I came down
The dusty roadside, seeking shady rest,
There where the apple trees are fruited best,
A woman old, and angular and brown,

Told me of Ethel and the one romance
The placid hamlet boasts of; or at least
The one event which never yet has ceased
To weave an interest round the noble manse.

She stated, with her contemplative sighs,
How once an artist with some fair renown
Came thereto from the distant red-walled town;
Partly because of former friendship ties,

Partly to paint the daughters' portraits there,
Where they in time would hold a rightful place
With the progenitors of their proud race,
And with their lineal children to compare.

How then they opened the low window wide
In advent of his coming; and made bright
The home so long since curtained from the light,
'Till it resumed its former air of pride.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

And here, a fortnight following, they threw
The great doors open to a merry throng
That filled the halls with laughter and with song
'Till each one felt his kinship spring anew.

How Ethel, in a cloud of misty white
Went hither, thither, with her winsome smile,
Encountering soft glances all the while,
Yet missing something of the old delight.

How was it strange her heart could be less gay
Thus moored upon new moods? How was it
strange
A young man's praise her musings could derange
In gentle pensiveness at odds with play?

Her father thought: "Before the rose sees day
The wayfarer must come upon the hills
To rob it of its morning. Love fulfills
No blessings like the joys it bears away."

And so the careless girl grew wistful eyed:
New hopes did venture into unknown themes.
And silent joy suppressed her wandering
dreams—
And yet, maid like, still oftener she sighed.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

There came the rosy evenings, and the grey
Of twilight 'neath the terrace porticos;
And star sown summer nights of calm repose
When love portrays his promises of day.

And ere the autumn blessed the passing year
With purple girted grapes and golden pears,
The country gossips paused amid their cares
Because sweet Ethel's nuptial morn was near.

Only a rustic who had loved her long
Felt anguish dull and silent as his love;
And vainly 'gainst his melancholy strove,
When all the earth was caroling in song.

She did not know; or if she did, forgot
The awkward youth with glance that ever fell
At stumblings in his words, which could not tell
What in the humble eyes a grief begot.

And she who was a child but yester eve,
Quaintly affirmed the old patrician pride,
And passed the manor portals as a bride
With dreams of life e'en she could scarce believe.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Perchance it was the place was always old—
But then her face was gone: the woman said
The path grew wild, that through the arbor led,
And winter snows lay trackless fold on fold.

Yet afterwards came letters glad and sweet,
With expletives of buoyancy and cheer,
Touched with regrets they also were not near
To make her life of happiness replete.

And Ethel wrote the Artist never tired
Of painting her as Helen or as Ruth—
Or Hebe rose crowned; everything, in truth,
That fancy brought his musings and inspired.

But then there came a time she wished for home.
Full sixteen months had passed. (A thrush's lilt
Is plaintive when the tiny nest it built
Is jarred by wind.) She asked them would they
come;

'And then as hastily she begged them not:
She said she needed chiding for her mood,
And wrote in playful way that she'd be good—
Seeming to fear the kindness she had sought.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

So, through the east wind and the fretful rain
Her missives came like messengers of Spring;
A letter is a holy, tender thing
When temp'ring thus our solitude or pain.

And then she wrote in careless vein for days,
Jesting in her familiar, loving tone;
With just a hint of tears: naught else was shown,
For still there were the same warm words of
praise.

At length the writing ceased; and Sarah wrote
And wrote in varied, earnest moods. Reply
Came not. The winsome spring went by
And summer hastened in with gladdened note.

One morning ere the flowers absorbed the dew,
Sarah went down along the trodden path,
Where now the vine a tangled webbing hath;
And clipped the freshest fleur-de-lis that grew

In tyrian pride against the wall's low jet;
Remembering they had once been Ethel's care
When she made triumphs as a countess there,
And called them her plebeian coronet.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Sarah turned citywards. A settled fear
Bruising her heart; but she was always brave
And backward turned, a hopeful hand to wave
The father's lonely, anxious day to cheer.

Shield not the north winds from your own ewe
lamb
Lest, when 'tis least prepared, 'twill lose its way
And fall amid the briars of some bray
Uncomforted, unsheltered and uncalm.

Few grew the country gardens. Sarah saw
The crowded, smoky buildings, iron bound,
Where dingy, noiseless sparrows fluttered round
And ceaseless work was the unwritten law.

And this was Ethel's home! She whose warm heart
Had breathed the rural air of purity,
Brought to the city's vast obscurity
And living with her memories apart.

The elder sister's eyes suffused with mist;
Her fingers tightened on the oozing flowers,
Which seemed so hopeful in the noonday hours,
But drooped their heads now, weary, on her wrist.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

She found at last the narrow winding stairs
That led into a tenement abode,
Where sorrow in her brooding had bestowed
Her grimmest pride amid her grimmest cares.

The story seemed so old. What deep regret
Is hid from pity's touch. Grief is too stern;
And in its throes we do not backward turn
From shadowy days except in retrospect.

The love had gone. The vacant room was dull,
And echoless the dismal corridor:
The love had gone, or sickened to the core
With her whose life with promise had been full.

A little babe in dreamy pliant rest
Nestled beneath caresses of her cheek—
The love had gone? Where children are, you
seek
Not vainly for the love God deems the best.

Thus Ethel started at the steps delayed,
And put the infant by, and dimly stared
To see what visitor thereto had dared
Disturb the sanctity this kinship made.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Yet still she turned the smile her girlhood wore,
And stretched her hands in her old pretty way;
Then seeing clearer, stumbled forth and lay
Wordless and pallid-lipped beside the door.

And tears long welled in bitterness were wept,
Flooding the breast surcharged, and sick and
frail;
Until it seemed its very walls must fail,
And silence reign where melancholy slept.

So some hearts break,—and some keep on their
ways,
Yet feel a dearth of all the dear desires:
'Tis hard to fan the embers into fires
Whose ashes scattered to the yesterdays.

When they returned the night was in the skies,
The father placed a taper near the pane
That faced the upward pathway in the lane,
To sign a benediction on their eyes.

The kindly curious tongues could not reveal
How they retraced the pathway to the door;
And she who left but twenty months before
From peering eyes her welcome could conceal.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

The lad grew like a cherub love: a child
One ever sued for kisses. In his face
They saw (though care had shadowed not its
grace),
The reflex of his mother's, when she smiled.

Stray school boys saw him crossing o'er the ways
His grandsire went; now catching at his hand,
Now issuing imperial command,
The worthy subject heralded in praise.

The story runs that for long years she came—
The sweet-faced woman, who though born to
mirth,
Seemed to forget the laughter of the earth
In minist'ring in charity's loved claim.

I found her name out there among the tombs,
And village lovers breathe first longings there,
And children lisp at times for her a prayer,
Or form in wreaths the early jasmine blooms.

I love to wander in the manor halls
And tell myself that here upon the stairs
She talked with him, and loitered unawares.
That where the moonlight on the terrace scrawls

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Its quaint devices in fantastic spells

 He placed a ring upon her slender hand;
 Bending to kiss the shining yellow band,
And speak the words not e'en a gossip tells.

That here, when they had gone, at length, a swain
 Brushed from his eyes the gathering tears, nor
 felt

 It was a bane to courage thus to melt
In hopes it never had been his to gain.

Now silently she sleeps the summer through,
 As must we all—our tragedies at end.

 Thus earth and heaven for our love contend,
And time blots out the worriments we knew.

Alack! how many idle hours I spend

 In labyrinths of half-definèd thought:
 Here, where of eager life there now is naught
Save what a dreamer's idle fancies lend.

A BUNCH OF VIOLETS.

An offering of violets; dear
And misty-eyed do they appear,
As if to hold a furtive tear.

They have the orange blossom's spell,
They hint of hopes, yet fears foretell—
Each like a dainty purple bell.

Oh, doubly dear! For there is lent
A mystery of sentiment—
From whom, she wonders, were they sent?

It might be he who with her then
Mounted the cliffs above the glen,
The world is large—but if again—

To-night she'll wear them in her hair,
And with the throng its festal share,
Perhaps he may be watching there.

IN THE RED DEEPS.

To Maggie Tulliver.

In the red deeps where the sad cuckoo's call
Is heard o'er the swish of the brook, and the fall
Of dead elder leaves—ah! long, long ago
A promise was given so sacredly low,
So joy-burdened there with faltering sweet
The very wood songsters were loth to repeat.

In the red deeps beneath love's twilight star
With nought but the twit of the night bird to mar,
They builded their future again and again
In dim hallowed castles of far sunny Spain,
Quite, quite content for their day star to dawn
After the night of repining had gone.

As yet her poor wavering spirit is here,
Which cautioned such hope, and questioned such
fear;
Paternity chides from a premature grave,
And a brother's slow anger for vengeance doth
crave.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Her love goes to all and her will goes to none,
While the great eyes look out on the future alone.

The years have flown; but the tall willow grieves,
The grey poplar mournfully scatters its leaves;
The brook frets along its cool pebbled way,
And winds thro' the shadow e'en in the day;
And never a bird in happy unrest
Wings upward in greeting its mate to its nest.

In the red deeps must everything bend,
As the starlight's pale opal beaming doth lend,
To mark where a grave stands out in the light,
And the cuckoo calls plaintively there to the night,
For now the love of a life time sleeps
In the red deeps—the forsaken red deeps.

Sweet story! a thrill of existence still stirs
Their twin silhouettes among the scotch firs,
The brown "little wench" and the lover hunch-
back
Are dearer by far for perfections they lack.
Gentle Reader, chide not this theme of thy heart,
And keep it tear dimmed from the others apart.

DREAMING LONDONDERRY.

In among the shaded waters
Londonderry lies,
Like a virgin queen reposing
'Neath the purple skies;
But when convent bells are chiming
Londonderry sighs.

Here were once dull sorrowed evenings,
And these shores grew chill,
When the sound of tramping armies
Swept the heathered hill:
Nature felt the stars grow colder,
And the earth turn still.

Murder dyed the waters crimson,
Sickness hid in caves;
And the cliff birds shrieked of famine
Passing o'er the waves;
But the peasant loves to tell you
Virtue filled the graves.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Rest ye! olden golden stories,
Rest ye! heroes slain.
Heaven's Prince will come among ye
When the centuries wane.
Memory of the past abideth,
But the King shall reign.

HONOR.

Something that is most holy here below,
Where men are wary with their hopes and fears;
Where many a Judas smites his Master's brow
And leaves him then to tyranny and tears.

But honor still is man's sweet heritage—
The jewel of his soul. Who casts it out
Finds himself poor indeed. Naught can assuage
His after recompense—his bitter doubt.

EN MASQUE.

(His Version.)

Scarlet carnations brushing
 Against my lady's furs;
Tell me she too is blushing
 (My heart in rapture stirs) :
 I sent them, too—
 Can it be true
She wore them at my asking?
 Oh, urgent fate!
 How can I wait
At this infernal masking!

Now in among the grouping
 Of most benignant palms,
I find that I am stooping
 With all a lover's qualms.
 I bend to kiss—
 Jove! what's amiss,
And have I lost my reason?
 It is not she—
 But you'll agree
All buds are sweet in season.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

(Her Version.)

Oh, Clare, I scarce can tell you,
'Twas in among the palms
When I was resting: well you
Know there are countless shams
Of aching feet,
Of light and heat,
That make us seek the shadows;
To nothing say
Of hands that stray
And touch our own with sad "Oh's."

Well, it was there, behind a chair,
A Cavalier came smiling—
[(I promised Ned I'd meet him where
The vines bend to the tiling).
But gracious me!
It was not he!
I did not know till after—
And all night long
Thro' dance and song
I heard a stranger's laughter!

SHERMAN'S MARCH TO THE SEA.

Steadfast, revered and grave,
Monarch e'en 'mid the brave,
O'er field and mountain cave,
 Sherman had gone.

Shame swept the laggard then,
Pride looked on what had been,
Hope thrilled the weakest men
 When his eyes shone.

Who claimed the fever burned?
Who from the ranks returned?
No man but onward yearned,
 Facing the dawn.

Though gladdened or distressed,
First on the foe he pressed,
Last was his heart to rest
 'Till he had won.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

His bones may sift with dust,
His sabre reddened with rust,
But his diviner trust
Lives on and on.

MEADOW GOSSIP.

A riotous bee got drunk at work
 (So swallows say
 That passed to-day),
And fell in a dandelion grey,
An old one—not a bud of May;
And buzzed and elbowed with awkward jerk
 To the drooping flower's dismay.

A hundred sprites with gossamer wings
 Did straightway rise,
 To his surprise,
And bar the sunlight to his eyes;
And smother down his feeble cries;
Not caring a whit for probing stings
 And scoffing at his size.

He stumbled out and wildly sped
 Across the lawn
 And on and on;
But myriad hosts were close upon,
Under and round about his head.
They found him thus in a clover bed
 In a filmy gauze at dawn.

CALL OF THE BLUEBIRDS.

Dreamer, be gay,
Drive care away
And sorrow send a-maying;
Is spring not here
With blossoms dear,
In hollow nooks essaying?
Dreamer, be gay,
Though gold or grey
The skies of grave portending:
Time with his scythe
Hurryeth by,
The darkest hour hath ending.
Dreamer, be gay—
There's always May
For some heart grieved with waiting:
If yesterday
Hope went astray,
To-morrow 'twill be mating
With some new theme
Or old-time dream:
'And, oh, the world is bringing
Its joys to you
Across the blue
Of earth and heaven singing.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

AS TOLD BY THE ROBINS.

Of old, they said, when fair Narcissus bent
His face of twenty summers o'er the brook
His brain fell dizzy; and the hue forsook
His youthful cheek in one enamored look:
Till down he sank, senseless of all, and spent
With that reflected light his beauty lent.

Then waxen flowers unknown before to earth
There suddenly in clusters did appear,
And made for him a snowy incensed bier;
But each one held within its heart a tear.
And having thus such grave and holy birth,
Men ever since have loved them for their worth.

We, too, knew a Narcissus—not as he,
A myth of fevered fantasy extolled—
But just a child and scarcely five years old,
Who leaned with floating curls of clouded gold
Above a brook which, clear as crystals be,
Did mirror there the soul of infancy.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

He must have seen the vision therein flung
And dropped in ecstasy: the zephyrs knew,
And whispered to the robins, wondering too,
How angels came with unseen flowers to strew.
They found him where the tangled vines o'er-
hung—
Pure as the lilies that he lay among.

KATE'S LITTLE GIRL.

Kate's little girl is growing so,
As cheery and elate,
As quick to smile, as sure to soothe
As sunshine loving Kate.
But we would stay the coming years
And crowd the memories by,
For something hurts within the heart,
And then we wonder why.

We'd have her differ—just a bit,
This motherless, wee girl:
We would her brow were not as white,
We'd change this wayward curl.
Her laugh infects a gloomy day,
And yet our own is slow,
Kate's little girl is so like Kate—
As she was years ago.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

SINCE YESTERDAY.

(Alumnae Poem.)

Since yesterday—and we have parted, all
In our different ways. The moorings freed,
We drift and drift, out and beyond the call
Of oldest friends, perhaps beyond their need.
But very sweet it is to “harbor in,”
Like mariners who row against the skies,
In deepening dusk—to greet the waiting kin
Or wave a blessing to the watching eyes.

Sometimes to “harbor in”: the staid recluse
To thrill at laughter from the worldly wise;
The worldly wise, wearied a little, muse
If all the brightness on the outside lies.
And there are those who would give much to come
If only that they might. But far away
They know that we are gathering at home,
And envy us communion here to-day.

Since yesterday! and, oh, the things we've learned!
How it were vain to wish for what we choose;
How when our hearts are too unwisely turned
'Twere best, indeed, that we should fail and lose.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

How, vanquished, it were even brave and great
To grasp the poor, poor pittance of a jest,
And smile upon the world that bids us wait—
As if to wait would give the longings rest.

But we are now for happiness: to hear
The old-time step, the glad return, and smile;
And for the sake of hopes that have been dear,
To talk in reminiscences awhile.
A woman's life is filled with many things:
The gains of proudest effort may be few;
But sometimes retrospection softly sings

Since yesterday!—and we have parted, all
In our different ways. The moorings freed,
We drift and drift out and beyond the call
Of oldest friends, perhaps beyond their need.
But when, on days like this, we “harbor in,”
Let all our best impulses nobly plead,
Let us be loyal to the past, and win
The love of parting words: “Good-by, God-
speed.”

THE JESTER.

The jester in his ribbons yellow
Was such a merry, careless fellow,
There was a toast and happy laugh
Whene'er he raised his bell-bound staff—
 ('Twas in the play, you know,
 Not truly in the long ago),
But there were courtiers and beaux,
And ladies fair and rival foes,
 Wine, and the candle glow.

Oh, thoughtless wit! oh, ready laughter!
The darkness and the quiet come after.
No repartee within the pit,
No echo of the leader's wit.
 The heavy portals close
 With here a ribbon, there a rose,
Which lately kissed a gleaming shoulder
Or withered in a smile grown colder,
 Or parting gift—who knows?

But let us laugh into the morrow,
Until we have surcease from sorrow.
Let us be jesters if we will,
Yet keep a kingly kindness still;

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Until the light burns low,
And lips repeat the farewell slow;
'Till watchers close the portal door,
And say in whispers, "It is o'er,"
As in the long ago.

CLIFF DWELLERS.

What though the perilous paths are steep
Here the Pueblo Chieftains sleep.

The cliff birds circle o'er their heads,
The trees revere their silent beds;

And jutting ledges curtain in,
The destination they could win.

But who shall say what wider hopes
Were builded in the rugged slopes?

Whence came they? To what elder day
Dated the zenith of their sway?

What weird affinity was theirs,
Which made them to the forest heirs?

They learned the heavens' fitful signs,
And converse held with rugged pines.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

And each a botanist of wealth,
Gleaned woodland lore in idle stealth.

They heard afar the doe's light tread,
And knew where paths as cautious led.

They saw the eagle ride the wind,
Which sent his clarion call behind.

And life was sweet ere we had come
To humble their primeval home.

Then grew they doubtful of the stars—
In lightning guessed the flash of wars.

Was it so long ago? The earth
Is solemn here, and censures mirth.

The twittering birds a matin sing,
The twittering birds their vespers ring.

Save this, there is but quietude,
Where dreaming souls like mine intrude.

THE PSALMIST.

Thence, from a labyrinth of grief he strayed
 Into the gold-grey morn,
Scarce had the linnet found the thistle seed,
 Scarce was a matin borne;
And yet the dreamer smote the quietude
 With restless words of scorn.

Then something in the calmness bent his head
 And dragged his heart for cause;
And whispered "Patience, striving, fevered one,"
 Yet who his counselor was,
Nor man, nor child, nor bird, nor anything
 Could tell what made him pause.

He swept his hopes aside: and light broke in
 'Till grief seemed but a tide
Of dreams. He felt the old, old weary world
 Rebuke him for his pride.
'And he went forth with sabbath in his soul,
 'And angels at his side.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

IN AN OLD LIBRARY.

The greatest minds, the sternest souls
Have here their chosen home;
And words from strangers coldly fall
As kisses on the tomb.

So often was the story penned
From Holy Writ to him
Who lately satirized the world
From attic windows dim.

Oh, themes of life! Oh, shades of death!
The secret's ever here—
Affinity through centuries
Doth trace man's smile and tear.

And in such tender imagery
The same regret is told—
Smiles from the golden yesterday,
Sighs for to-day grown old.

BEFORE THE DAWN.

'Tis the eve before her wedding day,
And lo! beside an open grate,
With Ned (dear, constant Ned) away
She questions once again her fate.
She has no friends to greet or shun,
Only the forms of shadowy dreams,
Who jest at her folly one by one,
And whisper snatches of bygone themes.

Beribboned bundles—half a score—
Of letters wordy, and gay, and old,
Strung with such sentences girls adore,
And laid by gently, fold on fold,
Are slowly thrown, one at a time,
Upon the purple-flamed, silent coals,
And caught up quickly—oh, the crime!
This holocaust of wounded souls.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

'The light now burnishes her hair,
Now seeks the glamor of her eyes,
Now slants across her shoulders fair,
Now on her chin in quivering, lies.
Oh, Ethel! could your fiancé
Thus see you play a dreamer's part,
Would he so conqueringly say
Your love is cloistered in his heart?

'Tis the eve before his wedding day,
His mind is full of what has been;
Of Ethel,—and Alice, and Dell, and May—
When the chaps of the Chester Club drop in.
The bottles are cold and their spirits warm,
They clink their glasses to a toast;
And of inward mirth and outward storm
I give you my word they make the most.

Some do chaff him on former vows,
And rake up names and claims and whims,
One to his own sweet self allows
A story credit rather dims:
While the lady afar, near the oakwood fire,
Rises alone as the clock strikes ten,
'And turns away from the blackened pyre,
But on the threshold looks again.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

The lights at length burn low on one
Alone beside the banquet board:
Ah, well, for the day now just begun,
Ah, well, for the smile in fine accord.
Heigho! dear, "constant Ned," you pay
A tribute to the early dawn.
The cups are drained—the east is grey,
And long ago your guests were gone.

APRIL FOOL.

Oh, ho! they laugh—the whirling winds—
And tease to tears the truant flakes,
That all forgot the vernal signs
And tried to whiten wood and lakes.
But April's bonny flowered head
Reflects in many a wimpling pool,
Till muddiest waters rippling trace
Quaint letters spelling "April Fool."

Like spots of sunshine in the vales,
The dandelions' gold is spun,
And through the blue the robin sails
And calls his fellows—every one:
Oh, life most gay and life most grey,
The world is now instinct with love;
And life is quickened with the day,
And peace illumines the skies above.

RETROSPECTION.

Betty looked so quaintly slender
 In among the garden pinks;
Even now, may God defend her!
I can see my queries send her
 Blushing thence: she slyly thinks
That I'll fear I did offend her.

Then, disconsolate, I chide her,
 As from out my arms she slips;
'And I follow close beside her,
'Till her grey eyes open wider
 As I bend to kiss her lips,
Where the honeysuckles hide her.

How I loved the little maiden
 In the heyday of my youth!
Loved the smiles all sunbeam laden,
And the walks that we have strayed in;
 But she shall not know the truth,
Nor of hopes my heart delayed in.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

For I cannot all forget her,
 Since she's married and away:
Though I said in my last letter
That she never could do better—
 Still I sighed for that May day
When among the pinks I met her.

THE LAST.

The last smile is the best remembered one,
The last song lingers longest in the heart,
The last hope hath a sweetness just begun
When we recall how life had there a part.

The last flower that we saw along the way
When Autumn leaves did almost make a mound
(That none should see how desolate its stay),
Was brightest for the barrenness around.

For everything is lost to that the most—
The foothill terminates the blossomy path:
The rest at eve doth still the noonday boast,
And dusk's dim dream a solemn dearness hath.

The last friend is the best; for he hath known
The test of years wrought with our battle scars;
And we and he can tent at night alone
Like Arab outcasts 'neath the desert stars.

The last love is the best: whate'er is said,
About the early moods our youth caressed:
That heart that held a grief uncomforted
In tender silence is a surer rest.



The Drinking Song

DRINKING SONG.

There's fame to win through the weary night
From truths the sages have revealed—
There's name to win in valorous fight,
And laurels on the battle field.
But here are rugged mountain friends,
And here the rare October ale;
And here in the glow the firelight lends,
Nor love nor faith doth ever fail.
Sing till the wooden rafters ring
'(God speed the heroes gone),
Goodwife, thy choicest vintage bring,
For the night is wearing on.

The yule log challenges the gale,
The flames laugh at the wizard wind,
As every man relates a tale
That thrills the heart and wakes the mind.
Deeds of the past the present dim;
Yet who would bow o'er woes of yore?
So fill the glasses to the brim
And drink to happiness once more.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Sing till the wooden rafters ring
 (God speed the heroes gone),
Goodwife, thy choicest vintage bring,
 For the night is wearing on.

TENNYSON'S DEATH.

The Laureate sank beneath the tide of dreams
In that calm hour when thro' the silent skies
Come angels in their snowy wingèd guise
For hearts aweary of the noonday gleams.

The Laureate sank; but turned his wistful gaze
In full souled inspiration to the east;
And mused, perchance, on being so released,
Just as the moon rose o'er the autumn haze.

He of the earnest, meditative heart,
Had been a dreamer since his earliest days;
When all the world had worn Byronic ways,
And every one had voice and grief apart.

And when his favored poet lay in death,
"Byron is dead" was writ upon the sand;
And on great oaks he carved it with his hand,
And murmured it all day beneath his breath.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

We always felt that he did half conceal
Some sadness, hidden from the eyes of men;
Though ever as we read we saw again
The deeps that call to deeps in vain appeal.

The Laureate sank; and death so softly swept
Its sable pinions o'er the moonlit bed,
They hardly knew his heart was stilled and
dead,
And by his side their lonely vigil kept.

INCOMPLETENESS.

Nothing is wholly sweet: The morning rose
Shifts shivering on a breeze; the lily lends
Its satiny robes to dust. Abide thou then
With grief a little. Thy immortal crown
Shall weave no thorns like those thy heart wore
here.

OCTOBER.

The yellow mellow month is come,
The rarest month of all the year,
A sweeter breath of woodland balm
Is borne to us—October's here!
Imperially is she arrayed,
Her royal vestments trailing low,
The beauteous, golden queen of time
That shames the tyrian purple glow.

'And as she treads the soft cool earth,
With aerial step and lovely ease,
'A radiance of splendor dyes
The amber of September trees;
Till crimson, gold and russet hues
Are blent in tapestries of haze,
'And all the human heart is stilled
And filled with tender moods of praise.

'A listless, dreamy languor falls
When Autumn's requiem chant is o'er.
We gaze beyond to lengthening years,
We muse on all that went before.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

So much is dead that once was dear;
So many birds of home in quest,
Now ride the wind above the trees—
Poor little things, what wild unrest!

Still merrily sings yon truant one,
(A swallow in the maple shade),
And bright the morn o'er woodland ways
Where Aristaeus might have strayed:
Or Fancy, in brief respite, charm
A moment from the dying day;
And then with drooping lashes steal
The musing heart from care away.

COMING OF WINTER.

She steps in stealthily at night,
The maiden witch in ermine cloak,
'A thousand sprinting stars at peep,
Within her eyes; and at her stroke
The fir trees turn a shaggy white,
And chestnut boughs bemoan their plight;
While with a laugh
She strips the path
Of pale-faced gentians asleep.

She hath a cavalier—Jack Frost—
They lay the fruit-hung grapevines low,
'And on the shrubs, uncovered still,
A swift pulse-numbing breath they blow;
'And shake the pines at any cost,
Nor care what stateliness is lost;
'And then freeze o'er
The lakes—and more,
Stray homeless sparrows do they kill.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

They powder the far-reaching plain,
With sifted star-dust—so it seems—
For in the morn, like gems alight,
It hurts the vision with its gleams,
'Till dissipated once again,
By dull November sun, which fain
By kindly rays
In purple haze
Would set all saddened things to right.

Alack! when forests feel the chill,
The amber tints will surely glow,
And with each sweeping northern wind,
An avalanche of leaves will blow
Their red and russet from the hill,
And every vacant cranny fill;
A pretty fix
This witch's tricks
Have served the earth, to sleep consigned.

But on the levels of the corn,
Where goodly sheaves so lately stood
Like marshals of majestic rule,
The keen winds pass with jibings rude;
Or whistling down the rows forlorn,
Reveal the gaunt decline for scorn;

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Until they choose
Themselves, to lose
Their dignity to frolic cruel.

The bell above the steeple clock
Breaks on the midnight with a fear,
E'en so, no mischief will it share,
And chimes out sturdily and clear;
And thus its very self doth shock,
At which the hollow echoes mock—
What ho! who waits—
Besides the gates
Must now see sceptres everywhere.

Yet do I love thee, Winter lass!
For thou dost bring the absent home;
The summer lacks thy rugged cheer,
And hearthside where the lost ones come.
Sweep angry winds around the pass,
Thy trackless snows in vain amass,
They see thy light,
Far thro' the night,
That guides their eager footsteps home.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

LONGFELLOW.

He was a gentle man of solemn thought:
 I do not know
He ever harshly spoke, for peace to him
 Was sweeter so.

His not the ruddy flame that genius stirs,
 But that which burns
With steadier light for those across the seas
 And home returns.

His not the soul to strive for courtly praise:
 One fireside friend
To him were worth the plaudits of the world,
 Or lauded end.

Yet generations hence, time still will see
 His honored rest;
And still the memory of the poet sage
 Be deemed the best.

A PLATONIC LETTER.

(A Deviation.).

My Dear Tom :

So you say at last
Your bachelor days are all but passed,
That you and Nell are to be wed.
So kind of you to write, instead
Of letting me from Bertha get
The grand dénouement. She'll regret
She could not come with ill-shown grace
And tell me, studying my face
For hints of my apparent peril,
Now, honestly, I hate that girl!

Oh! I forget to tender you
Congratulations that are due :
For Nell's a dear, and quite the kind
To make you happy. I've a mind
To love her for your own sweet sake :
Perhaps she would not care to stake
Approval on such friendship.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

She

Adores you, Tom, 'tis plain to see.
A blonde, too! Think of the brunettes
You used to number with your pets.
Holmes says there are two kinds of blonde,
And goes to show how he is fond
Of one. Do you remember that?
You used to read the Autocrat.

You've not forgotten how we made
A promise 'neath the maple shade
(Romantic, wasn't it?) that each
Would tell the other when we'd reach
The matrimonial stage. You wrote
In consequence, of course, that note.

Now Nell would say, perusing this,
Ere the conciliating kiss
Of peace, "What poor taste," then
You'd say (most generous of men),
"Oh, Dora's lovely, Nell,—although
No girl is dear as one I know;
A girl as fair as angels are."
Etcetera. You are quick in war
Of this kind. Always be discreet
And make a sure and safe retreat

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Behind a rampart of wild praise—
(Just as you used in the old days).

How I run on! There's much to tell,
But it will keep. My love to Nell;
I'm going to write a note to her,
On different lines, as you'll infer.

Receive, dear Tom, here at the end,
Again, best wishes of your friend.

P. S. Don't let your fiancée
See this poor scrawl; she would be grey
Within a week. Or she might cry—
She knows not half. Good-bye, Good-bye.

HIS THOUGHTS OF HER.

Linger, maiden of the south!
Your warm, bud-blown, scarlet mouth
Belies the languor of your eyes:
Could I anger there surprise,
And fire the twilight centered disk,
All but your pardon would I risk.

Maiden, stay! For I would teach
The youth's dear hopes, its depth, its reach;
And yet I would not first declare
The vows of love—I'd have a care—
I would not brush the dahlia's dew,
Nor bruise a may bird's wing—would you?

BETWEEN LOVES.

She ran along the dismal strand,
And called against the storm,
While cliff birds shrieked against the winds
That lashed the seaman's form.

Afar, her cabin window gleamed,
It never seemed so dear,
As thus with Seth's wee wistful face,
Which to the night shone clear.

Yet wilder than the storm, her heart—
More powerful her plea;
For still the crippled child at home
And still the maddened sea!

Ah! but he came, as oft before—
Though neither tried to say
Why he was saved, while other men
Were washed ashore at day.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

"Come, wife," brave Donald cried, "I know
Death rode the harbor then,
But Seth should not be left alone
For half a hundred men."

And Seth before the sun arose
Was out in idle play,
Gathering up the yellow heads
Of poppies on the bay.

BLIND MILTON.

What were your aims, Philosopher of Dreams,
When night came o'er your greatness: what the
goal
That roused your silent musings into themes,
Pure crystallized from broodings of the soul?
Your strength would not be shackled to a grief
That held your mighty heart from all it loved:
Would not be mated to despair, though brief;
But found resources hitherto unproved.

And though your ears were purged with sounds of
earth—
The throstle's call in morning matin stirred,
The dash of waves against the cliff—the mirth
Of childhood to some sudden impulse stirred.
Your lips were sealed by sorrow's weariest kiss,
And dumb the longings of slow passing days,
When nothing hurried, nothing went amiss
But kept its gloom of suffering always.

FRIENDSHIP'S FRAGRANT FANCIES

Sometimes, perhaps, you asked the daughter there
 (So eager to assuage your lightest quest,
She made solicitude e'en chafe your care)

 If there were not grey vapors in the west
Predicting storm; or if you erred to say
 The dusk had come, since birds had ceased to
 sing;

Or if the flowers she plucked along the way
 Might not be the first primroses of spring.

'Anon you led her into stranger worlds,
 Dictating rhythmic measures to her pen,
As one who with ethereal hosts imperils
 His right to pass with mortals here again.
And on the solemn height of thought, the cries
 Of earth were hushed, and pain was not until
Your daughter peering in your sightless eyes,
 Found solace in bewildered tears and still.

JUL 7 1905

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